Constitution of the Communist Party of the United States of America

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PREAMBLE

The Communist Party, U.S.A. is the political party of the working class and is dedicated to the interests of all working people and all specially oppressed peoples. Its aim is a socialist society.

Such a social system will act in the interests of the people rather than for private profit of capitalist corporations. Only through abolition of the capitalist system and the socialist reorganization of society can exploitation of one human being by another be ended, and with it the evils of oppression, war, racism, and poverty.

Under socialism, capitalist "democracy" based on domination of our economic and political life by the owners of the multinational and other immense monopoly corporations will be replaced by socialist democracy based on public ownership and operation of the means of production, within a state led by the working class. In eliminating private profit, socialism will end the cause of national and racial oppression of the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American Indian, Asian-Pacific and all other specially oppressed and foreign born peoples, as well as the cause of anti-Semitism, and of special oppression of women.

The heart of the Communist Party's day-to-day program is the struggle for peace, democracy, equality, against racism and for improvement in the living conditions of all working people. The fight of the people of our country for detente and peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems, in support of struggles of oppressed peoples for national liberation and against imperialist aggression is our fight.

The fight of workers for jobs and full employment, improvement of their living and working conditions, for organizing the unorganized and defending their unions against attack by monopoly capital and its government is the fight of our Party.

The struggle for equality for Black people and against racism is central to all social progress. It is central to the fighting unity of the working class, and to the struggle for the equality of all other specially oppressed minorities. The fight of the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American Indian, Asian-Pacific and other specially oppressed peoples for full economic, political, social and cultural equality is the fight of our whole Party.

The fight for the full equality of women is also the struggle of the whole

Party. The struggle of the working people, urban and rural, for improved living conditions, against the crushing burden of taxes, for better housing, health, education, child care, cultural and recreational facilities, the struggle of the youth, the senior citizens and of the farm laborers and small farmers for their special needs — all these are our fight.

Monopoly capital and the government it dominates continually press in a reactionary, repressive direction, curtailing the democratic rights of the vast majority and increasing the threat of fascism. Our Party continually fights against this danger and to expand the democratic rights of the people.

All these struggles weaken capital and particularly challenge the monopolies that dominate the system. They are also the struggles through which the necessary conditions are created for the working class and its allies to curb the power of monopoly and proceed to take power and build socialism.

The working class is the only class capable of leading the people against the monopolies and to socialism. It faces the ruling capitalist class daily at the point of production and on all other fronts of social struggle. Because of its

position in the system of production, the working class, through organization, has the potential of great power.

The Communist Party is part of the working class and a partisan of its interests. In the course of daily struggle, it works to increase the class and socialist consciousness and the political independence of the working class, to unite the class to defeat the main instruments of capitalist division, racism and anti-communism, and to bring the workers to the leadership of a growing people's alliance of all class and social strata whose interests clash with those of the monopolies. Only such a popular majority alliance, with the working class and the Black people as a whole at its center, is capable of curbing the power of the monopolies and opening the path to the socialist reorganization of society. The Communist Party is able to play this leading role because it is based on the science of society known as Marxism-Leninism and the organizational principle of democratic centralism.

Our Party strives for socialism through peaceful expression of the majority will. Whether this will be possible depends on the workers' ability to prevent the U.S. ruling class from using violence to block the people's will.

The Communist Party recognizes and fights for identity of interests among workers of all lands, an identity which is also in the true national interests of each country. In this spirit of working class internationalism, the Communist Party cherishes its solidarity with the world Communist movement and the socialist countries, especially with the first country of socialism, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It also seeks the closest bonds with the working class in the other capitalist countries.

In the struggle against U.S. imperialism, the world's most powerful imperialism, our Party works to build the solidarity of the U.S. working class with developing countries, the national liberation movements and especially with the victims of U.S. imperialist aggression, exploitation and domination. Only through world working class solidarity and anti-imperialist unity can peaceful coexistence be assured and the world saved from nuclear war.

The historic cause of the working class determines the goals of the Communist Party. That cause is the cause of all working people and therefore of all humanity. To that end the Communist Party fights shoulder to shoulder with all who struggle for peace, democracy,

equality, against racism and for improvement in the living conditions of the people. The historic destiny of the working class is, in alliance with all working people, to replace capitalist exploitation and oppression by a socialist system of common effort for the common good.

For these purposes the Communist Party, U.S.A. is constituted and establishes the basic rules of its organization in the following Constitution:

ARTICLE I
Name

SECTION 1. The name of this organization shall be the Communist Party of the United States of America.

ARTICLE II
Principles of Organization

SECTION 1. The system of organization of the Communist Party is based upon the principle of democratic centralism, which guarantees the unity of will and action of the membership and leadership. Collectivity is the basic concept of the style of work of the Party.

Democratic centralism combines the maximum involvement of the membership in determining policy and in the democratic election of leading committees with responsible direction from one national center coordinating the activity of the entire Party along common agreed-upon lines of policy.

SECTION 2. After a thorough discussion in any club, committee or convention, decisions are arrived at by majority vote. All members, including those who disagree, are duty bound to explain, fight for and carry out such decisions.

Decisions of leading committees on major questions shall be reported to all other Party bodies. Any member, club or committee, disagreeing with a policy has the right to appeal a decision to the next higher body and request that the question be reopened and to express their views through the channels established for that purpose during preconvention discussion periods. But no member or leader has the right to violate such decisions or to combine with others to conduct an organized struggle for their point of view. Factions are impermissible in the Communist Party.

All appeals of decisions made to the next leading committee shall be heard by the respective body within 90 days or at the next regular meeting of the committee. Appeals may be made to successive leading committees up to and including the National Convention. Decisions of the National Convention are final. While the appeal is pending, the decision must nevertheless be carried out by all members of the Party.

SECTION 3. The principle of democratic centralism includes the obligation of all members and leaders to fulfill the decisions arrived at by the majority. Both leaders and members are bound by a common discipline.

Discipline is voluntarily assumed by members upon joining the Party and based on conviction, understanding and devotion to the cause to which the Party dedicates its efforts.

SECTION 4. Each Party body is subordinate to the next higher body, with central authority vested in the National Convention, the highest body of the Party, which not only has the authority to act on all aspects of Party policy and activity, but elects the national leadership to carry through its will and decisions between conventions.

SECTION 5. The election of officers and leading committees at all levels shall be carried out with the fullest participation of the members of the electing Party bodies.

Elections shall be on the basis of a critical review and evaluation of the work of the electing body and of the individuals proposed for office. In elections to all Party committees, conventions and conferences steps shall be taken to maximize the representation of industrial workers, specially oppressed peoples and women.

Officers and leading committees are responsible both to the bodies which elected them and to the higher leading committees. All officers and members of leading committees may be released or removed from office by majority vote of the committees to which they are responsible.

SECTION 6. The Party as a whole, and each of its bodies including every club, shall plan and work for the mass circulation and use of our press and literature.

ARTICLE III
Membership

SECTION 1. Any resident of the United States, 18 years of age or over, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex or religious belief who subscribes to the principles and purposes of the Communist Party shall be eligible for membership. The age requirement for admission to membership may be waived in individual cases by a majority vote of the district committee when, in its judgment, special circumstances warrant.

SECTION 2. An applicant for membership shall be endorsed by at least two members of the Communist Party in good standing. Such application shall be subject to approval by a majority vote of the club to which the applicant is presented. In unorganized territory in the absence of a club, the application shall be presented for approval to the next leading committee having jurisdiction.

SECTION 3. A Party member shall study and accept the Party Constitution and the Party Program as determined by the Convention, belong to a Party club, be willing to participate in the work of

the club and the Party, carry out its decisions and pay dues. Membership in the Communist Party is a voluntary act of the individual.

SECTION 4. Party members three months in arrears in payment of dues cease to be members in good standing and shall be so informed by their club leadership. Members who are six months in arrears shall be dropped from Party membership after effort has been made by the club leadership, through personal interviews, to bring such members into good standing. They may, however, apply for readmission within six months, and upon approval of the club, be permitted to pay back dues and regain their former standing.

SECTION 5. A member in good standing changing his or her place of residence from one district to another shall ask the district of origin to transfer his or her membership to the new district. This is to be done within 30 days. The transfer, accompanied by a collective evaluation of the comrade's work, shall be submitted through the Central Committee office to the new district. The new district shall accept such a comrade as a member in that district only after receipt of the transfer.

The sending and receiving districts and clubs shall have responsibility for processing the transfer application as quickly as possible.

ARTICLE IV
Structure

SECTION 1. The basic unit of the Communist Party shall be the club. The two basic forms of the Party club shall be based on 1) place of work with the shop club as the highest form and 2) place of residence with the neighborhood club as the highest form. All other forms are transitional.

Each club shall have officers and an executive committee which shall be elected at the time of the annual club conference. Elections shall be by secret ballot if such method is requested by any member of the club.

The purpose of the annual club conference shall be to conduct a thorough, critical review of the work of the club during the past year, and to project the plan of work for the coming year on the basis of Party policy established by the National and District Conventions.

All clubs should have officers who fulfill the following functions: chairperson, financial secretary, educational director, labor secretary, press director, literature director, and a secretary who records all decisions. Two or more functions may be performed by one person. Additional officers and committees may be elected by the club.

Officers and committees are responsible to the club, and shall report on their work to the club from time to time. Financial reports shall be submitted to the club annually. Additional financial reports must be submitted when requested by a majority vote.

SECTION 2. District organizations may be established by the Central Committee, and may cover one state, part of one state, or more than one state. Where there is more than one district in a state, the Central Committee may establish such forms as are necessary to deal with questions of state-wide importance.

The district organization shall comprise all clubs in one district. The District Committee shall have the power and duty to establish whatever subdivisions best fulfill the needs of Party work, such as state, county, city or section organizations.

The highest body of the district organization is the District Convention, which shall meet at least once every four years during the preconvention discussion period prior to the National Convention. Each club in the district shall elect delegates to the convention in such numbers as the District Committee may determine, provided that the number of delegates to which each club is entitled shall be in proportion to its membership. To be eligible for election as a delegate, a member shall have been in good standing for at least six months.

Members of the District Committee shall be elected in such manner and number as the District Convention may determine. All elections to the District Committee shall be by democratic process including secret ballot.

The District Committee shall elect such officers as it deems necessary. Officers so elected shall be members of the District Committee by virtue of their offices, and shall be responsible to the District Committee. The District Committee may elect an executive committee and any other committees it deems necessary.

A vacancy among members of the District Committee may be filled until

the next Convention by secret ballot and majority vote of the members of the District Committee.

To be eligible for election as a district officer or member of the District Committee a member shall have been in good standing for at least one year preceding the date of the election.

Special District Conventions shall be called by a majority vote of the District Committee or upon the written request of clubs representing one-third of the membership of the district.

The District Committee shall name a committee to administer the finances of the organization, which shall be responsible to the District Committee. The District Committee shall make a financial report to all regular District Conventions.

The District Committee shall meet at least four times a year. A request by one-third of the members of the District Committee or by one-third of the clubs for a review of a district policy or adoption of a new district policy requires that such a discussion be held by the District Committee.

ARTICLE V
National Organization

SECTION 1. The highest authority of the Party is the National Convention which is authorized to make political and organizational decisions binding upon the entire Party and its membership. Regular National Conventions shall be held every four years. A National Convention may be postponed beyond the four-year limit due to extraordinary circumstances by both a three-fourths vote of the Central Committee and a majority of the District Committees.

SECTION 2. The National Convention shall be composed of delegates elected by each District Convention by democratic process, including secret ballot, and in such number, in approximate proportion to the membership it represents, as the Central Committee may determine. To be eligible for election as a delegate, the member shall have been in good standing for at least one year prior to the date of the Convention.

SECTION 3. Special National Conventions shall be called when there is an affirmative vote of 40% of the members of the Central Committee or a majority vote of 40% of all District Committees.

The office of the Central Committee shall circulate any official request from any District Committee for a special National Convention to all other District Committees for their action. The time and place of special conventions shall be fixed by the Central Committee. The basis for representation shall be determined in the same way as that for regular conventions.

SECTION 4. Prior to regular National Conentions at least four months shall be provided for discussion in all Party clubs and leading committees on the main resolutions and problems coming before the convention. During this discussion all Party organizations have the right to propose amendments and changes to the draft resolutions, the Party Program and the Constitution, to adopt resolutions on all questions of policy and tactics and on the work and composition of all leading committees for consideration by the Convention. All policies and decisions, however, remain in full force during the preconvention discussion.

SECTION 5. Each National Convention shall determine the number of members of the Central Committee. Election of the Central Committee by the National Convention shall be by secret ballot.

In the election of the Central Committee, in addition to individual merit, such factors as class and social composition, wide geographic representation and political importance of the district organizations shall be considered.

SECTION 6. Vacancies in the Central Committee may be filled by majority vote of the Central Committee. Members may be released or removed by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Central Committee.

SECTION 7. The Central Committee shall elect from its own membership an executive committee and such officers as it decides upon.

The Central Committee shall establish such other committees as it deems necessary. All such officers and committees shall be responsible to the Central Committee.

SECTION 8. To be eligible for election as a national officer or member of the Central Committee, a member shall have been in good standing for at least the three years preceding the election.

SECTION 9. Between National Conventions, the Central Committee is responsible for the enforcement of the

Constitution and the execution of the general policies adopted by the National Convention. The decisions of the Central Committee shall be binding on all Party organizations and members.

Between National Conventions, the Central Committee is the highest authority of the Party, representing the Party as a whole, and as such has the authority to make decisions and take actions necessary and incidental to the good and welfare of the entire Party, and to act upon all problems and developments occurring between conventions. In the fulfillment of its duties, and in the exercise of its responsibilities, the Central Committee shall guide and direct all the political, organizational and educational work of the Party, organize and supervise its various departments and committees, organize and direct all undertakings of importance to the entire Party, and administer the national treasury. The Central Committee shall submit a financial report to each National Convention.

The Central Committee and the District Committees shall encourage the widest discussion by the membership on all questions of theory and general line of Party policy. They shall provide organs to facilitate such discussions provided that in the opinion of the Central Committee such discussions do not

hinder or impede the execution of Party policy and decisions or weaken the unity of the Party in action.

The Central Committee shall not make any major policy change until it has submitted the proposed change in draft form to the Party organization for debate for specified periods and for recommendations thereon. In an emergency, which must be affirmed by a two-thirds vote of the Central Committee, the Central Committee may adopt another procedure for making a major policy change, including a referendum vote of the entire membership or the calling of special enlarged, delegated conferences on a national or regional basis.

In the discussion of such major policy changes, rules for pre-convention discussion shall apply in regard to the proposed policy change only, except that the period of discussion may be determined by the Central Committee.

SECTION 10. The Central Committee shall meet at least twice a year. The officers or one-third of the members of the Central Committee may call additional meetings.

SECTION 11. Summaries and reports of Central Committee meetings shall be

made available to District Committees and shall appear in digest form in publications available to the Party membership. Such reports may be published when the Central Committee so determines.

All departments and leading committees shall submit reports regularly to the Central Committee.

SECTION 12. The officers of the Central Committee shall make known to the members of the Central Committee any request of any member of the Central Committee for either a review of a policy or the introduction of a new major policy question.

A request by one-third of the members of the Central Committee for review of a policy or for adoption of a new policy requires that such a discussion be held by the Central Committee.

SECTION 13. The National Convention shall elect a National Council. The National Council shall work with the Central Committee in developing policy and participate in broadening the implementation of Central Committee policies among working people and in the Party organization.

The National Council shall be con-

vened by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee.

Vacancies in the National Council may be filled, and members released or removed by a majority vote of the Central Committee.

The National Council shall be elected by secret ballot. It shall be elected in a manner and with considerations similar to the election of the Central Committee except that eligibility for membership shall be two (2) years in the Party prior to election.

SECTION 14. The National Convention shall elect by secret ballot, in a manner similar to the establishment of the Central Committee, a Central Review Commission. The Central Review Commission is charged with the responsibility of reviewing the observance of revolutionary working class Party standards in the conduct of all Party bodies and members. it shall work to guard and preserve Party unity, adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles, practice of democratic centralism, Party security and financial integrity.

Membership eligibility shall be at least three years in good standing prior to election. The Review Commission may fill vacancies and release or remove its members by a ⅔ affirmative

vote. The Central Review Commission shall elect an executive committee to conduct its work between meetings of the full Commission. The latter is to be convened at least once a year.

ARTICLE VI
Rights and Duties of Members

SECTION 1. Every member of the Party who is in good standing has the right and duty to participate in the making of its policies and in their execution, and to participate in the elections of the Party bodies to which he or she belongs.

A member has the right, within the Party organization, to express openly and uphold his or her opinion or differences on any question as long as the Party organization has not adopted a decision. This may be accomplished in meetings of the Party organizations and in authorized publications. After a decision, a Party member who disagrees has the right to appeal successively to the next higher body, including the National Convention. At the same time every member has the duty to carry out the majority decision.

Members may criticize the work of all leading committees and individual leaders, irrespective of the positions

they hold, for shortcomings, errors or unbecoming conduct, provided it is done in appropriate Party meetings, conferences, conventions or other Party bodies. An officer who interferes with this right of criticism shall be subject to discipline.

Any member may address a question or statement to a leading committee through proper Party channels. All intermediary bodies will forward such communications promptly. Leading committees must respond as promptly as possible.

During preconvention discussion, members have the right and duty within Party organizations and publications designated for the purpose to discuss any and all Party policies and tactics, and the right to criticize the work and composition of all leading committees.

SECTION 2. A member shall strive to attend all club meetings. Members shall continually strive to improve their political knowledge and their understanding of Marxism-Leninism, to take part in the discussion of Party policy, to initiate activities, to work for the aims and policies of the Party, and to seek to win new members to its ranks. They shall also read, circulate and help improve Party publications. All members shall circulate the press and make work with

the press central to their mass activity.

Each member shall practice criticism and self-criticism with the aim of improving the work of the Party, its bodies, and his or her own activity, and shall fight against shortcomings, violations of democracy, unconstitutional procedure and manifestations of bureaucracy. The Central Committee and leadership at all levels shall take the initiative and give the lead for the development of the fullest criticism and self-criticism in regard to shortcomings and resolutely strive for their correction.

It shall be the obligation of all Party members to struggle for the unity and other needs of the working class, against all forms of national oppression, national chauvinism, discrimination and segregation, against all racist ideologies and practices, such as white chauvinism and anti-Semitism. It shall be the duty of all Party members to fight for the full social, political and economic equality of the Black people and promote the unity of Black and white as essential to the advancement of their common interests.

It shall be the obligation of all Party members to fight for social, political and economic equality for Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native American In-

dians, Asian-Pacific peoples, other oppressed national minorities, and the foreign-born in the United States.

It shall be the obligation of all Party members to struggle against all manifestations of male supremacy and discrimination against women, and to fight for the full social, political and econmic equality of women.

SECTION 3. All leading committees shall seek a maximum of consultation with other committees, Party clubs and the membership in policy formation, and especially with those comrades directly involved. In the period between conventions, the various Party organizations, from Section Committee to Central Committee, may organize delegated conferences to evaluate Party work in a given field or to develop a position on new issues which may arise. Other forms of consultation may include membership referendum.

SECTION 4. All Party members who are eligible must belong to their respective trade unions.

SECTION 5. All Party members working in mass organizations (trade unions, farm, community, fraternal, etc.) shall promote and strengthen the unity and leading role of the working class, and

fight for the unity and needs of the working class and its allies.

SECTION 6. All members who are eligible shall register to vote in elections for public office.

SECTION 7. The Party shall give full aid in the acquisition of United States citizenship to those of its members who, because of unjust and undemocratic laws and practices, are deprived of this right.

ARTICLE VII
Control, Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals

SECTION 1. Subject to the provisions of this Article, any member or officer of the Party may be reprimanded, put on probation, suspended for a specified period, removed from office, dropped or expelled from the Party for actions detrimental to the interests of the Party and the working class, for factionalism, for making false statements in an application for membership, for financial irregularities, or for advocacy or practice of racial, national or religious discrimination, or discrimination on the basis of sex.

No action, including dropping, may be taken against a member without notifying him or her of the action and the reason for it.

Control tasks may be assigned to help comrades to overcome weaknesses and shortcomings.

SECTION 2. Subject to the provisions of this Article, any member shall be expelled from the Party who is a strikebreaker, a provocateur, engaged in espionage, an informer, or who advocates force and violence or terrorism, or who participates in the activities of any group which acts to undermine or overthrow any democratic institutions through which the majority of the American people can express their right to determine their destiny.

SECTION 3. Charges against individual members or committees may be made by any member or Party committee to the club of which the accused is a member or to the appropriate higher committee having jurisdiction. All such charges shall be handled expeditiously by an elected trial committee of the club or appropriate higher body. The trial committee shall hear charges, make recommendations and then disband.

SECTION 4. All accused persons concerned in disciplinary cases, except publicly self-admitted informers and provocateurs, shall have the right to appear, to bring witnesses, including non-members if agreed to by the trial comittee, and to testify. The burden of proof shall be on the accusers.

SECTION 5. After hearing the report of the trial committee, the club or leading committee having jurisdiction shall have the right to decide by a two-thirds vote upon any disciplinary measure, including expulsion. Disciplinary measures taken by leading committees shall be reported to the member's club. Higher bodies must be informed of all disciplinary actions above a reprimand.

There shall be an automatic review of all expulsions by the next higher body.

SECTION 6. Any member or committee that has been subject to disciplinary action has the right to appeal to the next higher body up to the National Convention, whose decision shall be final. The Central, District or other leading committee shall set a hearing within 60 days from the date of receipt of the appeal and notify the appellant of the hearing date. When, however, the appeal is to a District or National Convention, the

appeal shall be acted upon by the Convention following the filing of the appeal. The Central Review Commission shall review appeals from decisions in disciplinary cases and refer its conclusions to the Central Committee for its decision.

ARTICLE VIII
Initiation Fees, Dues and Assessments

SECTION 1. Initiation fees and dues shall be paid according to rates fixed by the National Convention. Between National Conventions, the Central Committee may revise the rates of initiation fees and dues by a two-thirds vote of the Central Committee.

SECTION 2. The income from dues and initiation fees shall be apportioned among the various subdivisions of the Party as determined by the National Convention, or by 2/3 vote of the Central Committee between conventions.

SECTION 3. Special assessments may be levied by the National Convention or by a two-thirds vote of the Central Committee. All local or district assessments are prohibited except by special permission of the Central Committee.

ARTICLE IX
Amendment

SECTION 1. This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of any regular or special National Convention, or by membership referendum initiated by the Central Committee or one-third of the district organizations. It may also be amended by a three-fourths vote of the Central Committee and a majority vote of the majority of the District Committees. This vote must be preceded by a minimum of a two-month discussion period in the Party organizations.

ARTICLE X
Authority

SECTION 1. The Communist Party is not responsible for any political document, policy, book, article, or any other expression of political opinion except such as are issued by authority of the National Conventions and the regularly constituted leadership of the Party.

For more information write to:

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COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.

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